NEWS AND LETTERS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to our associate editors, the following have assisted the MAGAZINE *by refereeing papers during the past year. We appreciate the time and care they have given.*

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Dear Editor:

This is to point a slight error in "The Phi Number System Revisited," by Cecil Rousseau (October 1995). The Lemma on page 283 is incorrect. If one lets α equal ϕ, then the hypothesis of the Lemma is satisfied in that $\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}[\phi]$ and $1 \leq \alpha < \sqrt{5}$. However, the conclusion is not satisfied as

$$|N(\alpha)| = |N(\phi)| = 1 = |N(1/\phi - 1)| = |N(\alpha - 1)|.$$

This does not affect the main theorem as, in the proof of the theorem, we know $1 \leq \alpha < \phi$ and the Lemma can be proved for this more restrictive case.

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Dear Editor:

I certainly liked the argument in "A One-Sentence Proof That $\sqrt{2}$ Is Irrational," by David M. Bloom (October 1995). The author and other readers might be interested in what happened today, when I, for no good reason, was flipping through an old *American Mathematical Monthly* that was lying on my incredibly messy desk. To my amazement, I found basically the same argument in "A Simple Irrationality Proof for the Quadratic Surds," Vol. 75, pp. 772-773. There, the author gets slightly different mileage out of the last equation $\sqrt{k}$ be m/n where m and n are positive and one assumes that either (a) n is the smallest possible value; or (b) m is the smallest; or (c) $m+n$ is the smallest. Each one of these three is contradicted by the equation cited above, hence the author claims he has produced three different proofs of irrationality.

Rick Kreminski
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Dear Editor:

There was a calculus manuscript I saw 20 years ago that had a beautiful bunch of algebraic methods for getting the integrals of elementary functions by methods such as those in "Limitless Integrals and a New Definition of the Logarithm," by David Shelupsky (October 1995). I had forgotten the author's name, but thought Vic Klee might remember it as he was the series advisor I was working with at the time. I wrote him, in part:

"The October *Mathematics Magazine* has a nice note on these sorts of formulas by the physicist David Shelupsky. The only problem with it is his notion that all of this is new. It may be original to him, or he may have amplified ideas he not recall hearing, but this is hardly new.

This is a case of no outlook on the past and light reviewing. I must have learned this general method from Burrows Hunt, one of my teachers at Reed. I see it is in his *Calculus and Linear Algebra*, W.H. Freeman and Co., 1967, p. 287, and it was certainly an old observation when I learned it from Hunt in the 1950s.

Those who do not know the past or fail to recall it will have the pleasure of rediscovering it and claiming it for their own as if it were new.

As for me, I am plagued with a memory that I can't put my finger on right now. Last night, after tossing and turning, I had the name I seek clear, after quite a few rounds of approximation. This morning it is gone. Can you refresh it?"

Klee supplied the answer: "Warren Stenberg."

Peter Renz
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